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OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
LINEN MANUFACTURE
OF
I R E L A N D.

By J — N G ree NE, Esq.

That City, which is governed by the worse Laws, but those firm and stable, is in a safer Condition than the City, where the Laws are better and more eligible in their original Institution; but where they are administered in a loose and fluctuating Method.

THUCYDIDES.



D U B L I N:

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To the Right Hon. and
Honourable the TRUSTEES
of the LINEN MANUFAC-
TURE of *IRELAND*.

GENTLEMEN,

IT is the Duty of every Man to study the Interest of that Country, by the Laws of which his Liberty and his Property are secured ; and it is further his Duty to make publick whatever he imagines may contribute to that Interest. This certainly is the Duty of every Individual ; but still it is of higher Obligation on particular Men ; I mean such as have received, from *your* Hands, any Part of the *publick Money*, be it ever so small and insignificant ; and it is not only the Duty of such Persons to lay that Money out to the best Advantage for the Interest of the Publick, but to communicate every Scheme, or Discovery relative and conducive to that End : Which must be a pleasing Consideration to you, Gentlemen, who are

Trustees for the Publick, when you reflect that those Persons, whom you have thought worthy of any Part of *that Fund*, have answered both your Expectations, and the general Good of the Nation.

These Motives have urged me to print the few subsequent Pages ; which (tho' very imperfect) may be of some Service, if a single Hint advantageous to our *Linen Manufacture* may be deduced from them—and if so, I shall be fully recompensed for the Trouble I have taken in them.

I am, Gentlemen, with great Respect, your most grateful, and obedient, humble Servant.



OBSERVATIONS, &c.

A LETTER dated *March 13, 1753,* Inscribed to his Excellency *Henry Boyle, Speaker of the Honourable House of Commons of Ireland,* fell lately into my Hands, signed *N. A.* Who the Author is, I know not; but, as he seems to publish merely with a generous and publick Regard for the Interest and Advantage of his Country, I shall take the Liberty to set him right in some Mistakes, which I am sure he would have avoided, had he given himself the *Leisure* to have been aware of them.

The *Writer* thinks it very strange to see Applications made for *Spinning-Schools, Flax-Shops, &c. &c.* Now I think such Applications no Way strange, because so constantly granted; and because, if not abused, no Bounty so useful.

In Page 6, he takes Notice of the *Præmiums* for raising *Flax*; and thinks no Service arises to the Publick therefrom. I can not

agree with him herein ; for these Encouragements, were they properly conducted, would prove of singular Advantage, as I shall endeavour to shew hereafter; and tho' the *Board*, as he observes, may stand obliged to pay 2000 *l.* to the Competitors for the *Præmiums*; and tho' they produced but 1000 *l.* Value in *Flax*, (I mean such as obtained the *Præmiums*) yet the several *inferior* Competitors, whose Quantities produced could not reach any of the *Præmiums*, might have amounted (for aught we know) to 10,000 *l.* Value.

The Writer takes Notice, that the first Intention of granting *Spinning-Schools* was for *Cities* and *Market-Towns*; and seems to imagine the Grants to *Villages* an Abuse. Surely this Opinion can not in Reason be supported—the more Manufactures are extended thro' the Country, the better; for all Manufactures flourish most in Proportion to the Cheapness of Labour; and the Cheapness of Labour is always in Proportion to the Cheapness of the Necessaries of Life. Now, it is well known, that Labour in the *Country* is abundantly cheaper than in *Cities* or *large Towns*; because Provisions are so; and *House-Rent* is grown so extravagantly dear in all *Cities* and *large Towns* in *Ireland*, that Mechanicks and Labourers can scarcely support themselves under the Burthen thereof. A very ordinary Cabin in the *Suburbs* of a *City* will set for three or four Pounds a Year; while one in the *Country*, equally good, with

with three or four Acres of Land, sufficient to maintain a large Family, may be had at the *same* Rent. So that, in few Years, I hope we shall see the *Country of Ireland* filled with large *Villages*; and those *Villages* the Seats of *Manufactures*, as in many Parts of *Great-Britain*.

The Limitation of Ages, from *eight* to *twelve* Years, for Children to be admitted into the *Spinning-Schools*, I take to be a mistaken Nicety; for why a Girl of *thirteen* or *fourteen* Years old should, by such a Limitation, be excluded from an Opportunity of earning her Bread, and becoming an useful Member of Society, I can see no Reason. Then again, the Limitation of Schools, for *three* Years only, to the several Cities and Towns, I think somewhat extraordinary; for what Figure would *Sixty* little Children make in the Cities of *Corke*, *Waterford*, and *Limerick*, towards supporting the *Linen Manufacture* in them, allowing *twenty* Children to each School, which I apprehend to be the Number allotted.

I am rather of Opinion, that *Schools* should be continued in the same Places they were first established, while there was the proper *Complement* of Scholars to supply them, instead of being shifted from Place to Place, without apparent Necessity; for this latter Scheme can only oblige some particular Men of Interest, or serve their Friends or Dependants, without being able to answer the Ends of the Publick,
'till

'till after a tedious Process of Time, if perhaps it should finally succeed at all.

Vis unita fortior is an Adage as true in *Politics*, as in *Natural Philosophy*: and tho' it must be for the Advantage of a Nation to have it's Manufactures spread, yet, like the Branches of a Tree, they should spread from a firm, established, and well-watered Root; for hasty Growths are weak and sickly; and tho' Sprinklings may help them to live, they can never make them flourish.

If I could hope that my Advice would be taken in an Affair of this Importance, I should recommend it to have the whole Publick Fund, granted for encouraging the Linen Manufacture, applied in some one County, under the direction of proper and chosen Persons, for a certain Term; and then to take it's Circuit thro' every County in the whole Kingdom.

It requires a great Force at first to put the Wheels of Industry in Motion; but once set going, they become self-movers ever after. A Nation, so much, and so long immers'd in Sloth and Idleness as ours, requires more than speculative Reason to rouse it to Activity and Labour. It is not sufficient to make an *Irish* Man remotely see his Advantage; he must be made immediately to feel it.

The good Effect of the Scheme I have mentioned may be shewn in one small Instance, where but an inconsiderable Part of this Publick Fund has been constantly and regularly applied.

applied. For I dare pronounce it, that the Establishment and Assistance given to Mr. *Smyth* at *Waterford* has been of more Advantage to the Linen Manufacture, than ten Times the Sum granted to him has produced, within his Term, by dispersed and trifling Gratuities thro' the rest of the Kingdom.

In Page 8, there is a larger Field for Objections than the Writer was aware of. He advises a Flax Ware-house in every County of *Ireland*, for the Reception of rough, scutch'd Flax, not under Three-hundred weight; and a Salary for Store-keepers. I am well convinced, there are some Counties in the North of *Ireland*, where a Building of 5000*l.* Cost could not contain the Produce of each County's Flax-growth, so as to keep each Man's Property distinct. But I will suppose, at a Medium, each Ware-house may cost 3000*l.* Now there are no less than thirty-two Counties in *Ireland*, which, at 3000*l.* each, will amount to 96,000*l.* which is the Fee Simple of the fourth Part of the Annual Fund; and Store-keepers Salaries, Repairs, and other contingent Charges, we may compute at another fourth; so that half the present Income is applied upon this Scheme.

But we will suppose the Ware-houses already built, or the condemned Barracks in the North appropriated to this Purpose; (tho', by the bye, he has not given the poor South one old Barrack) I should be glad to know, who would
venture

venture the Sale of his Flax to any Store-keeper whatever. What endless Clamours and Disputes would arise between the Proprietors and these Store-keepers, about the Delay in the Sale of their Flax, and the Preference given to one Man's Flax above his Neighbours!

The Scheme in Page 9, for making the Store-keeper's Receipts or Notes transferable like Bank Notes, is very extraordinary; for Flax, as I apprehend, is of a very perishable Nature, especially when lodged in old decayed Barracks. And if the Notes are only good for such a Sum as the Flax shall be disposed for, how shall the Rate of Discount be determined? And if they are to be valid for the full Value, the loss upon such a perishable Commodity, in all the Stores of the Kingdom, may be greater perhaps than the remaining Fund of the Linen Board. Paper-Credit may be very necessary in all mercantile States; yet too much of it may be as bad as a Scarcity of circulating Coin, which it is intended to remedy, as well as the Ease of negotiating Business.

In Page 13, he has struck out a Scheme very conducive to the Interest of the Linen Manufacture of *Ireland*; which is, granting no Præmiums but for Flax of our own Growth. His Zeal however carries him too far, by asserting that those, to whom Spinning-Schools are granted, never yet raised a single Ounce of Flax. I could produce many Instances to prove the contrary; particularly one Gentleman

man in the County of *Kilkenny*, who had last Year no less than forty Acres under Flax; and for some Years past not less than twenty. I have a Grant of a Spinning-School from the Board, and had this Season near six Acres of Flax. I have heard too of the same Husbandry in several other Places in this County, by the Proprietors both of Spinning-Schools and Flax-Shops, tho' we have but lately entered into any Industry relating to the Linen Manufacture.

I have gone thro' all the material Objections, which occurred to me in reading this Gentleman's Letter; and, as I premised before, it appears to be written with a Regard to the Publick Good; I shall therefore take this Opportunity, as a Member of the Commonwealth, to return him Thanks for his good Intention, and hope the freedom I have taken with his Letter will be looked upon by him in the same favourable Light.

I shall now offer some Observations relative to the sowing of Flax-Seed; and a few Hints towards extending the Linen Manufacture in this Kingdom.

That sound Flax-Seed raised in this Kingdom, sown in due Season, in a rich Soil properly Tilled, shall produce as good Flax and Seed as that produced from the Seed of any other Region or Climate, I firmly believe; and should be pleased that every Well-wisher to *Ireland* thought as I do.

Was

Was that idle (tho' too prevailing) Supposition of a Degeneracy of Seeds, and, of course, all Plants and Vegetables, to take Place, why should the same be limited to the fertile Soil and productive Climate of *Ireland*? Why should not the supposed Degeneracy hold good in *Holland*, *Russia*, and *America*? And, if that was the Case in those Countries, we should, many Ages ago, have lost the very Name of Flax.

I can not but allow, and so must every Man of common Observation, that every Plant, Grain, or Vegetable, will have different Degrees of Perfection, from various Degrees of Propagation and Culture—but the Thought of a Degeneration in their respective Stamina, or first Principles of Existence, should be abhorred as a Weakness, as an Imperfection in Nature, not capable of supporting and continuing an Uniformity in her own Productions. The same Wheat, both red and white, the several kinds of Barley, Peas, Oats, and Flax-Seed, which were sown by the immediate Descendants of *Noah*, have still, and for ever shall preserve their respective innate Properties, Qualities and Differences, without any Degeneration of their Species, otherwise than has been asserted.

To hear Men affirm, with a presumptive Air of Assurance, that Flax-Seed raised in this Kingdom from a well-tilled Soil, as fair to the Eye, as glossy, as smooth to the Touch, as heavy

heavy in the Scale, and as productive of Oil as Foreign Seed, shall degenerate, and give short Flax in a rich Soil, well prepared, has filled me with Amazement. If such Men had affirmed that the Seed of an Orange, or Pomegranate, raised in this Kingdom by Art, in a Hot-house, or Stove, and sown in the open Air, would never live, or, at best, would never produce either an Orange or a Pomegranate, I would most readily agree with them ; but if I saw Orange and Pomegranate Trees growing in our Ditches and Fields, bringing forth their Fruit in Plenty, with as high Relish and Flavour as those imported from *Spain* or *Portugal* ; and Men should affirm that the Seed of such Fruit, so growing to Perfection, would never do the same if sown again in this Kingdom, I should certainly think such Men either out of their Senses, or that they had an Intention to impose upon mine.

About eight Years ago, I was advised to send to *England* for some Red-seed Wheat ; and, with a great deal of that prevailing wise Caution, was desired every three Years to renew my Seed, or it would most certainly degenerate — but the latter Part of the Advice I took little Notice of. Accordingly I got four Barrels, which having sown, I have ever since retained pure and unmixed ; and the Produce from thence, annually to this Day, is as fair, plump, and as good Red-Wheat, as the original Grain I had from *England* ; and will remain
so,

so, without a Degeneration of it's original Properties, 'till the general Diffolution of Nature. The same I have experienced in the broad *Windsor* Bean some Years, by sowing them in a poor Soil, I have had them not much larger than the common *Irish* Bean; but this Season, by dunging the Ground well, I have them as large as the original Beans I had from *England*.

The same reasoning will experimentally hold good in every Soil or Climate, in every Plant, Grain, and Vegetable. I have not only the Authority of Reason on my Side, but the Assertion of *Moses* in his History of the Creation. "And God said, let the Earth bring forth
"Grass, the Herb yielding Seed, and the
"Fruit Tree yielding Fruit after his Kind,
"whose Seed is in itself on the Earth, and it
"was so."

But my Countrymen ever unattentive to their own Interest, to the Interest of their Country, even to the Voice of Nature, which is the Speech of Reason, shall spurn and despise the Bounties of Providence; and, at a great Expence, seek and import from strange Lands not equal, but inferior Supplies.

Thus the only Reason why *Irish* Flax-Seed meets with such Discouragements is from a Want of proper Culture by the Hands of the Countryman: for, as our own Seed (lying under Disrepute) is very cheap in Respect of that imported from Abroad, the same Labour will not be expended in Tilling for it; nor will he
sow

sow it in such rich and fertile Soil, as that Seed for which he has given a high Price ; so that, of course, the Flax will be short, and the Seed small and dwindled. But if the Countryman has not that Partiality for his own native Soil (which in some Cases may be commendable) surely he should have so much Honesty as to give her fair Play ; and Nature will most faithfully and bountifully do her Part.

A Clergyman near me had, by excellent good Tillage, prepared four Acres for Flax-Seed ; and hearing that a Ship was arrived at *Corke* with *American* Seed, he sent for as much as he imagined would sow his Field ; but, the Quantity he got falling short, he was obliged to sow part thereof with Seed of his own Raising : I do believe there never was a finer Field of Flax, for so much, ever raised in this Kingdom ; and if there was any Superiority between the Produce of the two Seeds, that from the *Irish* most undoubtedly had it.

Experiments of this Nature may be made to very good Purpose—and I am well assured, if there was a Prohibition on the Importation of Flax-Seed (giving three Years previous Notice) we should never be under a Necessity of importing a single Grain again ; which would save a Draw-back on our Linen Manufacture of many thousand Pounds Yearly, and the same in the Article of Flax. Then indeed the Countrymen would vye with each other, who should raise the best Seed—then the Linen Manu-

Manufacture would flourish in the South beyond expectation ; for, as the Generality of the North pull their Flax green, from the South they must have their Supply of Seed ; which would and must insensibly lead them into the Manufacture ; and into that Part of it mostly in demand Abroad—I mean the Manufacture of coarse Linens.

Suppose *Holland*, *Russia*, or those Countries up the *Baltick*, should prohibit the Exportation of Flax, and Flax-Seed, only for one Year—Pray what Figure would our proud, boasted Manufacture make? And why should we subject ourselves to the Mercy and Caprice of any Nation or Kingdom on the Face of the Earth, when we have it in our own Power to prevent our Ruin or Distress?—How came the Woolen Manufacture first established in *England*? Was it not by prohibiting the Exportation of their Wool to *France*? The *French* could not work up their Wool, being too fine, without a mixture of *English*—their Woolen Manufacture was at a stand—What then was the Consequence? the Clothiers and Weavers of *France* were starving, 'till they bethought themselves of flying to *England*; there they were received with open Arms—there they established the Woolen Manufacture, which is now the Staple of *England*, as the Linen Manufacture is of *Ireland*.

How far the same Jealousy or Policy may operate among those Nations, where the Linen Manu-

Manufacture is established Abroad, our prudent Legislature ought to be well aware of ; and ought to take such cautious Measures as may be sufficient to prevent the fatal Consequences, which we have good Reason, both from natural Sense, and historical Records, to be apprehensive of.

But Suppose we had a Redundancy of Flax-Seed above the consumption for raising the Material of our Manufacture, still we have the Satisfaction to think, that an Application may be made thereof, greatly to the Advantage both of the Tiller and the Kingdom, by extracting Oil from it, which bears a better Price than Rape-Seed Oil, and answers all the Intentions of it. I have known damaged Flax-Seed purchased at Rape-Mills for three Shillings the Barrel more than the Currency given for Rape-Seed, which this Year Rates at sixteen Shillings *per* Barrel. But Suppose such Flax-Seed sold only at twelve Shillings to supply our Mills, it would be well worth the Countryman's Labour to Till his Land for Flax ; as I know an Acre of good Ground will yield above four Barrels of Seed. This, in Time, would put a stop to the vast Quantities of such Oils imported from *Holland*, and be a considerable Saving to the Kingdom.

That the Methods formerly made use of by the Trustees, for Raising our own Flax, have not succeeded, is a very melancholy, but well known Truth. When Flax-Seed was by them

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imported

imported and distributed Gratis, it was most eagerly sought for, and obtained by great and rich Landlords ; and by some given away among their Tenants—by others shamefully sold to them. The acquisition of Seed on such easy Terms (I mean such Tenants as paid no Value for it) made them negligent in their Tillage for it ; by which Neglect the Flax raised was short, and the Seed poor and hungry. This Flax-Seed thus raised was returned into the Stores of the Kingdom ; and from the Ignorance (I will not add a worse Epithet) of many of the Inspectors all Degrees of Seed were received, and promiscuously heaped together on Lofts ; and by this Means, if any happened to be found and good, by throwing the bad among it, a total Corruption and Adulteration ensued ; which effectually destroyed that well intended Design of the Trustees.

Since the Scheme of the Flax-Seed has been frustrated, the Board have endeavoured at a new Attempt to encourage the Growth of Flax, by giving a Præmium of 500*l.* to each Province. This is sub-divided into seven Parts or lesser Præmiums : so that in a whole Province only seven Persons can possibly obtain them. In my Apprehension this can answer no Purpose, or Advantage to the Publick ; for it can never encourage the lower Farmers to sow a single Bushel of Seed, as they can have no Prospect of obtaining a Præmium. But suppose the 500*l.* divided thus—five Præmiums

miums of 20 *l.* Ten of 15 *l.* Twenty of 10 *l.* and Ten of 5 *l.* — Thus, instead of seven, it would yield forty-five Præmiums in each Province; and occasion such a Number of Competitors, that I am convinced more Flax-Seed would be sown in one Year, than if the Trustees gave their whole Fund in three Præmiums. It is true, a Præmium of 100 *l.* may induce some very great Farmers to sow fifty Acres with Flax-Seed, being paid forty Shillings *per* Acre for the bare plowing and sowing his Ground; but very few Farmers in *Ireland* are able properly to Till, Sow, Weed, Pull, Save, and Manufacture for Sale fifty Acres of Flax in one Season; and at the same Time perform all other Acts of Husbandry, equally necessary for the Interest and Support of the Kingdom. To me it seems almost an impossibility; and happy would it be for *Ireland*, if we had not one Farmer in it equal to such an Undertaking; for the monopoly of Land, by what we call great Farmers, proves the Poverty of our Country; if the Number of Inhabitants be the Riches of the Nation.— But I can conceive ten Farmers able to manage five Acres of Flax each, tho' even that I look upon as a Work of Labour and Difficulty.

After giving proper Encouragements for Raising Flax, the next Thing worthy the Consideration of the Trustees should be the devising easy Methods to have it broke and scutch'd, (so far as lies within their Cognizance and Pow-

er) and, in order to effect this, they have laid the fairest Foundation imaginable by giving proper Encouragement for erecting Flax-Mills. But still something is wanting to compleat this Scheme, which is a Regulation of the Prices to be paid at these Mills; (I mean such as they have contributed towards the Building.) The use of all Mechanick Powers is, either to save human Labour, or to effect that by a small Force, which, in other Circumstances, would require a much greater. And unless one or the other of these Intentions be answered, the use of the Power ceases. Now the use of a Flax-Mill is, to effect that by Water, which otherwise would require Man's Labour; and in a given Time, by the increase of it's Momentum, to effect that which would require ten or twenty Men to effect in the same Time; and so far as Man's Labour is saved for other more valuable Purposes, so in Proportion should the Matter or Subject, which is the Object of the Power, fall in it's Price. As thus—The breaking of Flax is the Subject of the Flax-Mill; and of Consequence, all Flax broke by a Mill should be Manufactured considerably cheaper, than if broke by Men's Hands. And yet what a shameful Advantage is taken at these Mills! greatly to the Detriment of the Linen Manufacture! for, instead of lowering, they rather enhance the Value of the Material, by demanding three Half-pence *per* Pound, or 21 *d.* *per* Stone, for breaking and scutching; which

is the common Rate demanded at these Mills (as far as I can learn) thro' the Kingdom. Whereas the highest Price demanded by any of our best Flax-Dressers is 16*d.* *per* Stone. Thus that which should be a publick Advantage is become a National Detriment.

The Grant of Spinning-Schools is one of the most obvious, and best calculated Schemes the Trustees ever concerted, for the Extent of the Linen Manufacture; and, at the same Time, the most Charitable one, with Regard to the Poor of this Kingdom. Yet this Scheme has been greatly abused: Men of Interest often obtaining them for the Support of low Dependants and poor Relations; and, if the Salary can be obtained, little Regard is paid to the Care and Instruction of the poor Children, who idle two or three Hours in the Day at the Schools, and at the end of the Year discharged are as little qualified to earn their Bread, as when they were taken in.

The Letter Writer *N. A.* thinks eight Years old an Age sufficient for Admittance; and none above twelve Years to be continued. He seems not to consider the Weakness of a State of Infancy: For, instead of discharging the Schools every Year, the same Set should be continued two or three Years at least. For they are now generally turn'd out, just when they begin to know what they are about; if they are so fortunate as to arrive at even so much Knowledge. For no Person can be said properly

perly to know the pleasure of Labour, 'till he partakes of it's Fruits; and no Person can be supposed to Relish the Sweets of it, 'till he has made it easy and familiar by excelling in the Practice. So that those Children (I mean of eight Years old) from an Aversion to Labour, natural to the Weakness of Youth, and the innate Genius of my Country; and at the same Time not made perfect in their Labour, from their short continuance in the Schools; when discharged, their Wheels are generally thrown on a Cock-loft to rot, and they return to their old Occupations of stealing Fence for Firing, or, at best, picking Potatoes; and this sometimes happens to the most diligent, and best instructed among them, from the Poverty of their Parents not being able to purchase Flax for them. But suppose half a Stone of good Merchantable Flax was given to each Girl, on her being discharged by the Trustees, or rather by the Person having a Grant of the School, I think it would have a good Effect. It would be a kind of Fortune to set them up; for they must be dead indeed to all Sense of Industry, if (having not only the Tools to work with, but the Material to work upon) they should suffer both to rot.

I shall here take an Opportunity to make a stronger Objection to the limitation both of the first and last Age, mentioned by the Author of this Letter; which I shall do from the Experiment of a Gentleman in the County of *Kilkenny*, who

who has lately enter'd into the Linen Manufacture. He is a Person of curious Research; and believing that no Age was either too young or too old to learn, he ordered a Girl of four Years old to be instructed in Spinning by her Mother, who undertook the Charge merely in Obedience to the Gentleman who was her Master; but made a Jest of the Experiment. However, in a few Months, the Child spun as much Two-dozen Yarn as made a Web of Cloth.

Some Time after, the same Gentleman hired a House-keeper, who had been born and bred in the *Isle of Man*; and had not even seen a Spinning-Wheel 'till she came into his Family. She was at that Time forty-two Years of Age, and her Master made her attempt to Spin, and gave her Flax of different Gripts to try her Hand upon. Whether or no it was her Genius that led her to make use of the finest Sort, I can not say; but this is certain, that, in about five Weeks Practice, she spun some Ten-dozen Yarn so well, that it encouraged her to go on 'till she finished enough for a Web of Cloth; which was afterwards bleached at my Green, and I never saw a better, or more even Piece of Linen in my Life.

This same Gentleman made another Experiment, by putting some Boys to Spin, who succeeded extremely well; but he took them soon from this Work, upon a manly Pride hinted at by *Otway*,

“ How

“ How like a Dog look'd *Hercules*,
 “ Thus to a Distaff chain'd ?”

Instead of twenty Wheels being granted to a School of twenty Girls, I apprehend there should be twenty-three at least ; for when a Wheel is broke, or out of Order, (by bad Workmanship) the Child, who owns that Wheel, is obliged to stay at Home, perhaps a Week or a Month, before it can be mended. But, by having a Surplus of three or four Wheels, that Disappointment and Loss of Labour is prevented.

The profuse, and indiscriminate Grant of Spinning-Schools is a wide Sluice to drain the Fund. But Suppose no Schools were granted but to such Persons as were, in some considerable Degree, engaged in the Linen Manufacture, such Persons having a more immediate and material Interest from the Produce of the Children's Labour, and, in all probability, a superior Knowledge for the proper Care and Instruction of them ; one School, in such Circumstances, would make more good Spinners, than three, in the usual and ordinary Manner of conducting them — and the granting of such Schools only, would be a great Encouragement for setting up the Linen Manufacture in many Parts of the Kingdom, where it has not yet made the least Appearance. It may possibly be objected, that this Hint arises from a Self-interested View ; but, if that be attended with Reason, I shall make myself quite easy,

as the Principle of Self-interest can not invalidate the possibility or probability of it's being a publick Advantage.

If the Trustees would appoint an Inspector for each Province, (the North excepted) it would, I believe, have a good Effect. The Inspectors to have a Salary: and their Business should be to visit, and examine the State of the several Spinning-Schools, Flax-Shops, Flax-Mills, Bleach-Yards, &c. in (what is commonly called) the Southern Part of *Ireland*. These Inspectors to be sworn into Office, to make a faithful and impartial Return to the Trustees, twice every Year, of all Matters and Things committed to their Charge. And any Person having a Grant, or Salary, from the Board for a Flax-Shop, Bleach-Yard, &c. who shall refuse the Admittance and Inspection of such Persons so appointed, (provided such Inspection be not made oftener than four Times a Year) to be immediately deprived of such Grant or Salary.

The great and only Market in the Kingdom of *Ireland* for the Sale of white Cloths is at the *Linen-Hall* in the City of *Dublin*. There is likewise a Yarn Market at the same Place.— But why there never was an Attempt made to establish a Market for grey Linens, hath surprized me much; especially, when so many Bleach-Yards have been erected near the City, and in the adjacent Counties. In the North of *Ireland*, the Markets for grey Linens are the
very

very Vitals and Support of the Draper ; for was he to buy his Yarn, and Manufacture his Cloth, he could have from his Bleach-Yard but one Return in the Season, instead of three. The Number of Weavers, that are daily Begging in the Streets, would then find Employment ; and the Women would then apply themselves to Spinning. And *Dublin*, which is now an overgrown, populous, slothful City, would shortly become industrious, rich, and flourishing.

I have heard it objected, that the Extent of the Linen Manufacture is one considerable Reason, why we have such a Scarcity of Grain, and are so often threaten'd with the melancholy Apprehensions of Famine, from the Quantity of Ground Annually occupied by Flax. But such Objections are made by Men, who know not the Nature of Tillage ; for I shall take upon me to prove the Raising of Flax shall increase, rather than diminish the Quantity of Grain in this Kingdom ; and, at the same Time that it increases, it shall (without considering the Quantity encreased) most considerably enrich the Tiller ; which Assertion I take upon me to prove in the following Manner.

Let any Farmer take (for Example) a Lay-field of eight Acres, which he intends Plowing for Wheat : Supposing (as in all Cases of this Nature) the Quality of each Acre to be nearly alike, and Suppose the Rent of each to be twelve Shillings. Let him break up four Acres
of

of the eight in the Month of *November*, letting it lie, what is called, a Winter-Fallow. The *February* following let him Cross-plow it, and with a heavy Harrow break it down. Let him Back-turn it in *March*; and, when harrow'd, sow Flax-Seed in it. The *May* following, let him take the four remaining Acres and Summer-Fallow them; and so, by repeated Plowings, prepare them in such a Manner as he thinks proper. Let him, after the Flax is pulled, sow the entire eight Acres with Wheat. I say he shall have two Barrels of Wheat more (or Suppose but one) on each Acre, which produced the Flax, than on the four Acres he Summer-fallowed. The Winter-Fallowing meliorates and enriches the Soil; and by covering the Ground in Summer, prevents the Growth of Weeds, and does by no Means impoverish the Soil; tho' falsely supposed to do so, because *Virgil* above 1700 Years ago happened to be told so.

We will suppose, at the very lowest Computation, each Acre of Flax, with it's Seed, to be worth, clear of all Expence, four Pounds; which will bring a clear Profit to the Farmer of 16*l.* on four Acres of Land Addition to his Profit on his Crop of Wheat. Thus Flax, instead of diminishing, would rather promote Tillage—the shameful Neglect of which, if not prevented, will, I fear, shortly ruin all our Manufactures; and Bread, which should be the common Food of the Poor (as in other Coun-

Countries) will grow scarce at the Tables even of the Rich and Great.

But Suppose the Farmer despises Grain, and depends on Sheep for his Rent ; this Farmer must, or ought to sow Turnips, as every Man should, living in the Country, who keeps but fifty Sheep. The Profit from Flax in this Case is vastly considerable, for he can have two Crops every Year from the same Ground—both of them the most profitable the Plow can yield, and that for ever, without impoverishing his Land ; namely, a Crop of Flax and a Crop of Turnips, provided he feeds his Sheep on the Ground where the Turnips grow ; and does not draw them off to Manure other Ground, as is now frequently practised. For, if he sows his Flax early in *March*, it will be fit to pull the latter End of *June* ; and, if he sows his Turnips by the Middle of *July*, he will have a good Crop.

The greatest Disrepute our Linens are brought to in Foreign Markets arises from the Frauds and Villainy of Lappers. Publick Seals are the Testimonies, the Vouchers of Publick Credit and National Honour ; as private Seals are of private Security, and Correspondence between Man and Man. Linens can not be opened and examined in Markets Piece by Piece : To prevent this delay in Traffick, and as a Security to the Purchaser, these Goods are sealed ; but these Seals or Stamps of Publick Authority, which ought to be held Sacred, are too

too often put into the Hands of Men, who most infamously abuse that Publick Trust and Confidence. Coining, or putting the King's Image and Arms on base, counterfeit Metal, shall be punished with Death, tho' the Fraud and Imposition intended may not extend to the Injury of a single Person. For the Coiner may be detected in uttering, or passing his first Piece; (the Receiver of the Coin in this Case having an Opportunity of detecting the Fraud either by his Eye, by Assay, or by Weight.) But in sealing damaged and unmerchantable Linens, there is no such Opportunity given the Purchaser. He is obliged, from the Authority of the Impression, to take rotten, counterfeit Goods for Sterling.—And shall not this base Forger, this Assassinator of Publick Credit, shall he not suffer Death?—But, if this be thought a Penalty too severe, but that the Evil is allowed to require some very effectual Remedy, let the Manufacturer, or Draper, fix his Name to his Goods—then he dare not Bribe—and if he should be so hardy, his Fortune will sink with his Credit. For it is the Draper who seduces the Lapper; and if his Ends are answered by vending his damaged Goods, he regards not the Injury his Country suffers, for he lies secure behind the Curtain of Secrecy.

I don't pretend to offer loose Hints as a perfect Scheme for the Trustees to regulate their Oeconomy by; but tho' the Board may be capable of framing Expedients upon every Occasion

sion which occurs, much better than any Scheme which I am able to form ; yet I think, that some certain and fix'd Rules known and established, tho' no less excellent than the former, may produce a surer and better Effect : So I shall conclude with an Allusion to, and Repetition of the Motto of this Paper.

“ That City, which is governed by the worse
 “ Laws, but those firm and stable, is in a safer
 “ Condition than the City, where the Laws are
 “ better and more eligible in their original Institution ; but where they are administered in
 “ a loose and fluctuating Method.”

J——N G——NE.

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